

**TOWN OF MANSFIELD
COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Monday, October 20, 2008
Audrey Beck Municipal Building
Approved Minutes

Members Present: Aline Booth, Leila Fecho, Toni Moran, Richard Pellegrine

Elected Officials and Staff Present: Jaime Russell

Absent: Joyce Crepeau, Patrick McGlamery, Bill Powers

- I. **Meeting Called to order** at 7:10p by chairperson Moran
- II. **Approval of 10/6/08 Minutes** – Fecho motioned, Pellegrine seconded, minutes approved unanimously.

NOTE: to clarify so that we may comply with new state regulations, secretary pro tem should e-mail DRAFT and approved minutes within five days to RUSSELLJL @ mansfieldct.org. He will forward the minutes to the CAC distribution and to Public Notices so they are posted to the web site within seven days of the meeting.

Discussed possibility of permanent appointment of a secretary. Discussion tabled given current membership interest in rotating secretary.

- III. **Public Comment** – no public in attendance.

- IV. **Old Business -**

Discussion: the purpose of the CAC meetings is to avail free and open exchange of information and ideas. Formal motions will be raised and documented as needed. Minutes to reflect decisions and summarized discussions as appropriate for public record.

A. Mission Statement

Reviewed Pellegrine's recommended mission statement submitted (See attachment: 10/20/08 Mission Statement Subcommittee Status Report).
Reviewed subcommittee's recommended mission statement with goals and duties.

Discussed communications to facilitate GOVERNANCE.

Referred back to subcommittee.

B. Comparable Towns

Chairperson Moran presented her research on comparable towns; she will call CCM.

Pellegrine has had no response to the letter he sent out prior to 10/6 meeting.

C. Comparable programs or recommendations

Chairperson Moran reported that there is no related academic discussion on communications to improve government/citizen discussion and decision making. The field of public information refers almost exclusively to regulatory requirements and increased electronic access to government information.

“Governance” as a subject provides some more useful discussion, especially regarding the newer technology of WIKIs. Discussed the possibility of confirmed e-mail login required for town citizen only participation in a WIKI.

Pellegrine reported that Mansfield and Coventry town council meetings as broadcasted recently were difficult to hear (audio portion was less than satisfactory) and the video was hard to follow. Recommended if TV, need to ensure quality video and audio. The last Mansfield Town Council meeting airs T/H/Sa at 7p, M/W/F at noon as a test run on Ch 13.

Russell reported West Hartford has a broadcast process to benchmark.

V. **New Business**

Public hearing scheduled for Wed 10/22 at 5:30p regarding CL&P transmission line upgrades presents an issue regarding the town involvement in communicating the importance of such events.

Recognizing that although this is not a town hearing, and the town posted a notice on the front page of the web site with related links, the issue is that there was no broadcast communication driving people to the web site to look for the information. The format of the CL&P signboards resulted in very limited potential audience understanding (small lettering, no call to action, limited number of signs).

For further discussion: Is it a reasonable request to recommend the town has the OPPORTUNITY to use multiple communications channels/vehicles to communicate the information about this meeting considering the impact the proposal will have on such a large number of residents?

NEXT MEETING: November 3rd, Conference Room B.

VI. **Reports** – no additional reports

VII. **Communications** – no additional communications

VIII. **Adjournment** – meeting adjourned at 8:49p.

(Attachment: 10/20/08 Mission Statement Subcommittee Status Report)

Respectfully Submitted, 11/04/08

Leila Fecho, Secretary pro tem

Attachment: 10/20/08 Mission Statement Subcommittee Status Report

We met and took into consideration the conversation we had at the committee meeting on 10/6. Following is the revised DRAFT statements for review.

DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT

Mansfield Communications Advisory Committee

Our mission is to promote successful communications between Mansfield town government, departments, Town Council, committees and citizens. Successful

communications will facilitate accessibility and accountability, making government more responsive to the will and the values of the Mansfield citizens.

Effective communications is the timely and ongoing activity of transferring information and ideas back and forth among all parties. Good communication uses a variety of available communications channels.

DRAFT GOALS (SUGGESTIONS, not in any order)

1. To create a communications strategy / policy;
2. To propose training curriculum for elected officials, staff and citizens on how to facilitate and participate in effective communications;
3. To evaluate and suggest improvements to town government publications to help citizens better understand how they can participate in governance

RESPONSIBILITIES as identified in the Mansfield Communications Advisory Committee Founding Resolution, 2007

- Make recommendations to the Town Council concerning general and/or specific communications policies and practices
- Monitor and evaluate communications policies and practices
- Review and/or recommend to the Town Council formats for specific types of public meetings (i.e. Town Budget, Informational Budget Meetings)
- Review and evaluate format for materials distributed for Budget Information Meetings, Town Budget Meeting and any other items as requested by the Town Council and Staff
- Investigate and recommend best practices for all aspects of communication among the Town Council, Town Administrative staff, Mansfield residents and regional interests where applicable